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FEBRUARY 2025

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO:

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

THE M23 AND RDF TAKE OVER GOMA CITY

In January, the March 23 Movement (M23) and Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) took control of Goma, the capital city of North Kivu province. The capture of the city follows a breakdown of peace agreements between the Congolese and Rwandan governments and the RDF's renewed involvement in the conflict against the Congolese military in December. The intense fighting over Goma and related M23 offensives into North and South Kivu drove an increase in violence involving the M23. ACLED records more events in January 2025 involving the M23 than any other month since the rebel group resumed its offensive in 2021. The violence involving the M23 in January 2025 alone reached levels comparable to nearly a quarter of political violence involving the rebel group for all of 2024. While 85% of the violence involving the M23 took the form of battles fought against Congolese military forces and allied armed groups, civilians were also increasingly targeted last month. Violence against civilians increased particularly as a result of numerous artillery strikes by the M23 and RDF into civilian-populated areas.

The takeover of Goma and surrounding areas in January has further permitted the M23 to embed itself in the local political administration of the province and generate lucrative tax revenues. Further, the control of the border town creates a security buffer zone for Rwanda by pushing insecurity further from the border and reorients the flow of goods and minerals in the region toward Rwanda.¹ Numerous economic activities have already restarted in Goma as the M23 and RDF look to show their capacity to govern and administer the city.²

In addition to overtaking Goma, the M23 mounted a southward offensive into South Kivu province, reaching areas north of

Kalehe by 29 January – over halfway to the South Kivu provincial capital of Bukavu from Sake town. The rapid pace of the southward offensive sparked concerns over the limited resistance faced by the M23 in the region and showed broader M23 interest beyond Goma. ACLED data show that the M23 and RDF were able to rapidly advance into South Kivu in part because the joint force had already engaged in widespread clashes and taken control of areas from Congolese forces around Minova town, situated in the northern part of South Kivu province, earlier in January. Despite the initial southward surge, Congolese forces and allies regrouped north of Bukavu, where clashes were ongoing in early February.

SOMALIA:

FEBRUARY 17, 2025

REMOTE VIOLENCE INVOLVING ISLAMIC STATE SOMALIA PROVINCE SURGES

In late December, Puntland state security forces began operations against bases, training facilities, and camps associated with the Islamic State Somalia Province (IS Somalia) in the Buuraha Cali Miskat mountain range and nearby areas of Puntland's Bari region.⁶ In response, IS Somalia conducted a wave of explosive attacks in Bari in January. Unlike on other occasions, when IS Somalia resorted to IEDs and crude bombs, IS Somalia started to use drones to target the Puntland security forces. In two separate attacks on 20 and 23 January, IS Somalia targeted the Puntland Maritime Police Force and Puntland

Dervish Force at a base in Buuraha Cali Miskat, reportedly killing two soldiers and injuring others. Officials in the region claim that IS Somalia launched similar drone attacks earlier in the month that were intercepted by security forces.⁷ Collectively, the drone strikes and at least seven other IEDs detonated by IS Somalia resulted in the highest levels of monthly remote violence since 2017. Shortly after the drone strikes, US President Donald Trump issued an executive military order to carry out airstrikes against IS Somalia positions in the Golis Mountains of Puntland.

Source: www.acleddata.com/africa-overview

SOUTH SUDAN:

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

DEADLY UNREST BREAKS OUT IN RESPONSE TO CIVILIAN TARGETING IN SUDAN

In January, demonstrations in South Sudan surged in response to ethnically targeted attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on South Sudanese civilians in Sudan's al-Jazirah state during the overtake of Wad Madani and surrounding areas.⁹ ACLED records 16 demonstrations in January. More than 60% of these demonstrations involved violence. Rioters looted and vandalized Sudanese-owned businesses, while at least 18 Sudanese and South Sudanese nationals were reportedly killed in the unrest.¹⁰ In Aweil, near the Sudanese border, rioters set fire to three homes belonging to Sudanese nationals, and at least nine people were killed.¹¹ Security forces frequently fought with rioters, using force to disperse crowds, injuring several, and

arresting anti-Sudan demonstrators across the country. On 18 January, the South Sudanese government imposed a nationwide curfew and restricted access to Facebook and TikTok, and a few days later, the National Communication Authority issued a three-month ban on these platforms.¹² Authorities lifted the curfew and social media ban 10 days later.¹³ Beginning on 11 January 2025 and continuing for several days, the SAF and allied militias reportedly killed over 120 civilians across al-Jazirah state, including South Sudanese nationals. Many South Sudanese nationals came to al-Jazirah as refugees, but the SAF often suspects them of collaborating with militia groups or supporting the Rapid Support Forces.

Source: www.acleddata.com/africa-overview

UGANDA:

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

POLITICAL VIOLENCE INVOLVING PASTORALISTS RISES

Violence involving pastoralists in Uganda rose last month, prompted by a large-scale attack by a suspected armed Karamojong militia in Pian Upe Game Reserve in Nakapiripirit district. The raiders stole over 500 heads of cattle from ethnic Pokot pastoralists before security forces intervened to retrieve some of the stolen livestock. Armed clashes broke out between pastoralists and security forces and were followed by pastoralist militia attacks on civilians during cattle raids. The violence, which involved ethnic Karamojong along with Jie and Pokot pastoralists, was highest in Agago district and reached levels not seen in Uganda since April 2023, when the Ugandan military carried out operations against cattle raiders.

Security forces have spearheaded disarmament campaigns since July 2021 in the northeast of the country, where small arms have proliferated amongst the population. Police claim to have collected 1,275 small arms since the campaign began. Prior to

the latest outbreak of violence, these efforts appeared to be showing signs of success as ACLED data shows a decline in violence involving pastoralists in 2024 compared to the previous year.

Source: www.acleddata.com/africa-overview

TANZANIA:

FEBRUARY 09, 2025

AFRICAN LEADERS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN EASTERN DR CONGO

DAR ES SALAAM, Feb. 9 (Xinhua) African leaders on Saturday called for an “immediate ceasefire” in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and reaffirmed their full support for seeking a lasting solution to the ongoing conflict.

A “historic summit,” jointly convened by the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), two major regional blocs, was held on

Saturday in the Tanzanian port city of Dar es Salaam to address the escalating crisis in eastern DRC.

In a final communique, regional leaders called for an "immediate ceasefire" and the restoration of supply lines in the DRC, as the March 23 Movement (M23) has reportedly been advancing toward Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, after establishing its so-called administration in Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and a key regional hub.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, leaders attending the summit directed the EAC-SADC Chiefs of Defense Forces to meet within five days to devise technical measures for enforcing an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

The leaders urged the reopening of traffic routes to restore humanitarian supply lines, particularly the road linking Goma and Bukavu, which has been cut off by the M23 rebellion's advances, and the Goma International Airport, which was severely vandalized during the hostilities.

Political and diplomatic engagement is the most sustainable solution to the conflict in eastern

DRC, the communique stated, as regional leaders expressed support for resuming direct negotiations with all state and non-state parties, including the M23, under existing regional mediation frameworks.

Kinshasa has rejected any form of direct negotiations with the M23 but has hinted at reviving the Nairobi Peace Process, a peace initiative led by the EAC and facilitated by former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

In the communique, regional countries proposed merging the Nairobi Process with the Luanda Process, a parallel peace mechanism initiated by the African Union and brokered by Angolan President Joao Lourenco.

Both peace mechanisms have faced setbacks. The Nairobi Process has reached an "impasse," according to Kenyatta's spokesperson Kanze Dena, who made the statement on Thursday, while a peace summit under the Luanda Process was abruptly canceled at the last minute in late December.

Source: www.xinhua.com

RWANDA:

FEBRUARY 09, 2025

RWANDAN PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME (FRONT) ATTENDS THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT SUMMIT IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, FEB. 8, 2025. (XINHUA/EMMANUEL HERMAN).

To support the merged "Luanda/Nairobi Process," regional leaders suggested appointing additional facilitators, including representatives from other regions of Africa, according to the communique.

The summit was convened to prevent the conflict from escalating into a regional war. "If it continues like this, war risks becoming widespread in the region," Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye warned in early February.

The conflict between the M23 and the Congolese government is deeply linked to the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and ongoing ethnic tensions, particularly between Tutsi and Hutu populations. The DRC has accused Rwanda of supporting the M23, while Rwanda says that the DRC's military has allied with the Rwandan rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, which is

accused of involvement in the 1994 genocide.

Both Rwandan President Paul Kagame and his DRC counterpart, Felix Tshisekedi, attended Saturday's meeting.

The communique reiterated the demand for the withdrawal of "uninvited foreign armed forces" from DRC territory, with leaders emphasizing respect for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

While hostilities have eased in Goma, UN humanitarian agencies reported on Friday that violence in South Kivu province is increasing, triggering mass displacement.

TANZANIAN PRESIDENT SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN (1ST R) ATTENDS THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT SUMMIT IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, FEB. 8, 2025. (XINHUA/EMMANUEL HERMAN).

Speaking at the summit's opening session, Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan reaffirmed Tanzania's commitment to supporting all efforts by the EAC, SADC and the international community to resolve the DRC conflict.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African

Cooperation of Tanzania, Hassan said that dialogue is the best way to achieve lasting peace and security in the DRC. She urged all parties to engage in peace talks and mediation to find viable solutions to the crisis and called on regional leaders to maintain unity in their pursuit of peace.

"This meeting provides us with an opportunity to demonstrate our readiness and commitment to seeking peace and security for our brothers and neighbors in the DRC," Hassan said.

The summit was co-chaired by EAC Chairperson and Kenyan President William Ruto and SADC Chairperson and Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

Source: www.xinhua.com

Ruto reiterated calls for all parties to immediately cease hostilities and take meaningful steps toward dialogue aimed at restoring stability.

"We stand together in calling on all parties to implement the ceasefire, specifically, for the March 23 Movement to halt further advances and for the armed forces of the DRC to cease all retaliatory measures," he said.

Ruto noted that an immediate ceasefire is essential to creating the conditions necessary for constructive dialogue and the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement.

KENYA:

FEBRUARY 8, 2025

KENYAN PRESIDENT WILLIAM RUTO SPEAKS AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT SUMMIT IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, FEB. 8, 2025. (XINHUA/EMMANUEL HERMAN).

He reaffirmed the EAC's strong commitment to achieving sustainable peace, development and regional integration, noting that the DRC's security is crucial not only for the country's stability but also for the prosperity and cohesion of the entire EAC and SADC regions. He urged all parties to prioritize dialogue, cooperation and, above all, the protection of civilian lives.

Mnangagwa called on summit participants to uphold the principles of transparency, truth and determination in the peace talks to ensure a lasting resolution to the crisis in eastern DRC.

He also advocated for a comprehensive strategy to address the long-standing conflict in the DRC, underlining that its impact extends beyond the country's borders, affecting the stability of the entire EAC and SADC regions.

At least 2,900 people were killed during the M23 rebels' capture of Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, according to the United Nations. The rebel group claims to have controlled the city since Jan. 26.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Friday that a bombing in South Kivu province injured three civilians and damaged power infrastructure in the town of Nyabibwe, about 60 km north of Bukavu.

Continued clashes in South Kivu are triggering mass displacement and civilian casualties. Thousands of people are fleeing active combat

zones toward Bukavu, which remains under threat of an M23 attack.

UN humanitarian agencies and their partners are assessing conditions in and around Goma, where hundreds of thousands of people are still on the move.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that many medical facilities in North Kivu were destroyed in earlier fighting, while others are struggling to resume operations. Essential medical services for cancer, diabetes, hypertension, mental health and other conditions have been severely affected, with medicine shortages and overwhelmed healthcare workers.

The threat of infectious diseases has also increased. Cholera, malaria, measles, meningitis, mpox and tuberculosis are among the major health concerns in the region. Nearly 600 suspected cholera cases and 14 deaths were reported in North Kivu between Jan. 1 and 27.

Goma's water supply was disrupted but has been partially restored in some areas, forcing

residents to rely on water from Lake Kivu, heightening the risk of cholera outbreaks.

The WHO has deployed emergency medical supplies, hygiene and water treatment kits, and tents to

Source: www.xinhua.com

increase hospital capacity by 1,000 beds. However, supplies are being rapidly depleted, and additional resources are urgently needed.

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